

Pam
Africa

Episcopal

JUL 28 1954

61

EPISCOPAL ADDRESS
TO
The Africa Provisional
Central Conference
of the
Methodist Church

June 1943



EPISCOPAL ADDRESS

By Bishop John M. Springer, D.D., L.L.D.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Being members of a Church that is world-wide in its membership and activities, we are met at considerable cost of time and expense to face as members of a Central Conference of that Church definite responsibilities and opportunities and to meet them to the best of our abilities.

In view of this wide relationship it is appropriate that we note a few general principles and conditions. We are one in a definite recognition and affirmation that fundamentally we serve the Lord Christ and at the outset we declare our utter dependence on Him who is the Head of the Church universal.

A Glimpse of the World.

In considering our responsibility to this world that is so much on the heart and in the Will of God, we are met in a most interesting, a sharply challenging, a decidedly auspicious moment.

A constantly shrinking globe, effected by ever speedier modes of transportation, culminating in this day in the actual possibility of circling the globe in less than three days, has brought the world of men into one community, where the conditions and interests of one are seen to be bound up with the conditions and interests of all.

The whole world is in a very painful process of learning that whenever a small, peaceable and undefended nation or people anywhere is wantonly attacked, subdued and annexed by an aggressor nation, the consequences of such action are not a local matter, interesting only to the peoples immediately concerned. Evidently the whole world sooner or later becomes involved.

World commerce is no fiction. In the early years of this century it fell to us to explore into regions and villages considered remote and as yet untouched by the throbbing life of the world. Yet in those primitive villages in the small clearings in the forests of Central Africa, we heard the pounding of the crude mallets beating out rubber; and taking note so as to be sure, we never found a village where there were not in evidence some articles of foreign manufacture, even in places where the only bits of clothing visible were skins of animals or locally woven grass cloth.

The various nations have been exploring, coveting, seizing, losing, developing, blundering, excluding, discriminating, conferring and warring over issues arising out of resources and markets. Admittedly World War I was largely a result of frictions rooting back in these issues and the same is true of the present war. Certainly there is abundant evidence that greed, strife, disesteem of others on

national and racial lines, and unbrotherliness in general are wide spread over the earth. The night of sin persists.

What of the morning? What is the solution? There is general recognition that the remedy for the bickering and rivalries and warring of the nations is not to be found in the continuation of the former methods of dealing with these matters. A new solution must be found in order to open the gate to the path of peace, real peace in the world.

The Church of Christ.

While the missionary spirit has never entirely died out in the Christian Church, there have been periods when there was but little manifestation of it. One such period prevailed two hundred years ago. Then there came a stirring here and there as individuals were laid hold upon by the Spirit of God for this work. Typical of the point of view of perhaps most church leaders of that day was that of a member of a body of churchmen upon whom William Carey was urging the proposition to send out missionaries: "Sit down, young man," said this dignitary, "when God wants the heathen converted, He will accomplish it without any interference from us." This was almost exactly one hundred and fifty years ago. William Carey who went to India in 1794, was one of the early pioneers of the modern missionary expansion.

The interest spread rapidly and the Protestant World particularly, became conscious of a world embracing commission resting upon the followers of Christ to spread the Gospel. Most of the denominations in establishing their missions, rather than concentrating each in one country or field, sent to various countries, evidencing in this their interpretation of the commission as world wide, or at least as being wider than to any one country.

It is approximately sixty years ago that the students of the Missionary sending countries were challenged with the watchword, "The Evangelization of The World in this Generation." Denominational families widely scattered in many lands began to hold World Assemblies; interdenominational agencies began to hold World Conventions. In 1900 was held a World Conference on Missions and another in 1910. Out of this emerged a Continuation Committee, today known as the International Missionary Council.

In 1937 two notable World gatherings by Christian Churches were held, one by the Universal Christian Council on Life and Work, at Oxford, and another, immediately following, by The World Conference on Faith and Order, at Edinburgh. In late 1938, closely integrated with these two Conferences, there was held at Tambaran, India, the decennial Conference of the International Missionary Council. Rooting back in all of these three World Conferences and with representatives designated from each of them, there gathered in Paris early in 1939 representatives of a goodly majority of the larger Protestant Churches of the World. Definite action was taken here in

recommending to the sending Churches that there be formed a World Council of Churches.

It is worthy of special note that this unity in spirit and in forward looking purpose on the part of the Protestant Churches to work closely together as truly one body in Christ, was consummated in the early part of the very year that this present World War was precipitated.

Up to date, nearly fifty Evangelical Churches have already officially endorsed this action and have taken the initial steps toward active membership. An ad interim Provisional Council is actually functioning in these days.

Africa.

It is as the Africa Central Conference that we are met. Judging from average elevations, Africa gives antecedence only to Asia, and so is probably the second born of the continents. Owing to the barrier of the Sahara and to her detached position, Africa as a whole has been late in coming into the current of the life of the rest of the World.

In contour a vast question mark, the enigma as to the interior of Africa long remained to tease and baffle those who looked that way. The hardy Phoenicians, and the adventurers of King Hiram, landed at various ports on the eastern shore down as far as modern Sofala, which certainly is the ancient Ophir, just south of Beira. Penetrating to the highlands of modern Rhodesia, they traded with the Natives of that day and forcing some of the inhabitants into their service they mined large quantities of gold. Some of this came from what is now the Mission estate at Old Umtali and being sold to King Solomon, went to the decoration of the Temple at Jerusalem.

The Portuguese and other explorers that ventured down the west coast, setting up symbolic Christian Crosses at many places, broke the path for white men of several nations who esteemed the dusky sons and daughters of Africa the most desirable and lucrative product of the Dark Continent. The participation by members and clergy of the Christian Church, not of one denomination alone, but of a goodly number of them in the course of centuries, in the African slave trade is one of the great subjects for corporate confession and repentance before God and men.

The descendents of the Negroes stolen from Africa are today widely dispersed in many lands. To some, at least, their presence here or there may seem to create problems. They are citizens of the lands where they were born and have as much right there as anyone. Repatriation to Africa has been proved to be impracticable, impossible, even unjust. Let any one troubled by this wide dispersion not forget that the situation and the problems were not of the black man's making.

One cannot overstate the iniquity, the suffering and agony of the

African slave traffic. Yet out of it God worked eternal life, glory and many other benefits for not a few, yea, for millions of His children wrested out of Africa.

Let Isaiah B. Scott, Advocate Editor, and later for years Missionary Bishop to Africa speak. In the days of his retirement he lived in Nashville, Tenn. It was our privilege to join with a number of others one year in celebrating his birthday. To the group he said in substance this, "For many years I considered the African slave traffic the sum of all villanies and unrelieved in its sordidness. But when I got to Africa and went out into the villages and saw the condition and life of the Natives of that land, I had a great change of mind. Around me swarmed naked urchins, unlettered, with horizons limited by the treetops of the forest surrounding their primitive, squalid, and dirty villages. And the thought struck me forcibly, Had not my father and mother been taken, although violently and against their will from Africa to America, the very great probability is that I would have grown up to be just like the people of this village. And so I came at length to the place where I could thank God for the fact of African Slavery."

The solution then of the race and class problem, we clearly see, and most emphatically declare, is not in eliminating, or segregating any one race from the neighborhood of or contact with another. The solution lies in the realm of the minds and the spirits of men.

Happily there are withal innumerable and multiplying instances of harmonious relations and of brotherhood between members of the different races growing out of a greater knowledge and appreciation of worthiness in the others. A true Christian faith, and perfected love leads one to respect the personality of another and to honor all men, as made in the image of God.

Happily there are numerous evidences that there is great advance in the Christian fold in the matter of extending brotherhood and in the overcoming of race, class and national prejudices. On the part of many, especially of the younger generation, a feeling about these differences seems almost or entirely non-existent.

One gain that seems likely to come out of this War is a lessening of such discriminations, in some quarters at least. There doubtless will be recedence in this regard where hate for the enemy has held sway. But in other connections, it seems probable that prejudices and attitudes have been blasted out of lives, of groups, and even out of nations that otherwise might have taken decades to achieve. The diligent bringing of the Gospel Message afresh or for the first time, as may be the case, to all peoples will give the means to hasten the healing process.

Resources.

Sphinx-like Continental Africa has spoken to the many who have ventured to penetrate the interior, and today the mysteries of her

climate, resources and people are pretty thoroughly cleared up. While the major part of the continental area lies within the tropics, yet more than half of even that large section has a temperate climate and modern medical knowledge and drugs make living safe in practically every part for those from colder climates.

The resources of Africa include an abundance of practically every known mineral; oil-bearing plants and trees abound; extensive forests contain hard and beautiful woods; almost all varieties of grains, vegetables, fruits, spices, etc. are freely grown.

Thousands of miles of navigable rivers thread the interior. In many of these rivers are attractive possibilities of developing almost unlimited water power; some of these projects have been already realized. Railroads have found no serious difficulties in penetrating the interior and motor roads are being woven into a vast network, with ever smaller mesh. Air routes are multiplying rapidly and probably no continent has a record of more good flying days per year than Africa.

The peoples of Africa, far from being exclusively of the Negro race, are greatly diversified, and include considerable numbers of Whites, Indians, Semites, and of mixed blood. Only little more than half of the 150,000,000 within the continent are pure Negroes. But it is mainly among Negro Africans that our Conferences operate, with responsibilities accepted for any and all others within our areas, as they respond to, or accept our fellowship and service.

The partition of Africa among outside powers for political and other control is a fact which can but be accepted. Some such arrangement would seem to be inevitable in this day. In the several colonies and countries there are quite different conditions of religious freedom. Governments differ greatly in a recognition and an appreciation of the aim and value of mission work, and in cooperation and support—or nonsupport—through grants and subsidies of such social services as education and medical work.

The fact that in these days what happens in the remotest part of the earth is spread out before the world in the morning paper next day is a decided deterrent and corrective. There is a growing world sentiment as to the responsibility of colonial and mandated powers to make the welfare of the peoples the primary obligation and aim. A policy of crass exploitation of the peoples of Africa is today seldom permitted, though there are undoubtedly in some colonies and countries of Africa, as nearly everywhere else, many wrongs still to be righted. Correction of such injustices in America and in Europe, whence Africa is so largely ruled and controlled, quite certainly will bring benefit to Africa.

It was a truism with Bishop Hartzell that he constantly stressed with administrators and business men, that there are three basic factors in society, Church, State and Commerce; that none of the three can be dispensed with; that there need not be conflict bet-

ween them; and that the very best interests of society are realized when each cordially recognizes the necessary presence and the sphere of each of the others. The best results obtain when all work together in cooperation and with mutual respect.

Methodism and Africa.

The connection of Methodism with Africa came about early. John Stewart, a scion of Africa, engaged in missionary work in Ohio, was one of the agents divinely used in the founding in 1819 of The Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The first outreach of the Church through that Society beyond America was toward Africa, in the appointment in 1832 of Melville B. Cox to Liberia. But Methodist members had preceded Cox, for among the first boat-load of freed slaves repatriated to the continent of their fathers were Methodist members. These had formed a class or society on board ship and so Methodism landed in Africa as a going concern in 1822. These Methodists had given a good account of themselves so that there were several classes or societies that sent representatives to the Conference held by Cox in the year of his landing, 1833. Sadly this year also recorded his death, six months after landing. But Methodism has had an unbroken record of life and activity in Liberia since 1822.

The oldest Methodist Society in Liberia is First Church, Monrovia, and the gavel being used in this Conference was a gift in 1937 from that Mother Church to your resident Bishop.

The second notable contribution of Methodism in America to Africa was William Taylor. But his first service was rendered long before he was bishop.

If ever a man can be said to have had seven-league boots it was this great world Evangelist. Led on step by step he had been instrumental in winning souls to Jesus Christ in each and all of the six continental divisions of the Earth with the result that vital church societies, missionary movements, self supporting schools, which also were centers of evangelizing activities, were to be found all along his world embracing travels.

In 1918 a member of the South Africa Wesleyan Methodist Church told me that fully half of the ministers, African as well as European, of that Conference were converts of William Taylor. Correspondence with Methodists in Australia at about the same time brought a similar statement regarding the ministers of that Conference.

In the early eighties the consciences of Methodists in America were greatly stirred as a result of the revelations of conditions in inner Africa made by those two greatest of African explorers, Livingstone and Stanley. In casting about for a man to lead in a crusade of evangelization of the Dark Continent the choice, in the Providence of God, fell upon William Taylor. One putting of it was, "Let us turn William Taylor loose in Africa." Corporately that was about all that

the Church did do during the next three quadrenniums. The annual grant of the Missionary Society for the Evangelization of Africa in that year 1884 was approximately three thousand dollars, and there were no notable increases in the appropriations during Bishop Taylor's administration and leadership.

Long used to financing projects for the Kingdom apart from the treasuries of societies, he had a strong conviction that no matter what sums philanthropic people anywhere would contribute to his enterprises, local resources should be explored, tapped and developed to the utmost possible.

The response to Bishop Taylor's challenge was notable and large. Funds sufficient became available to transport missionaries in large numbers to Africa, to house them and to give an initial equipment of tools, trading stock for stores, etc. And there was no lack of volunteers, both of families and of single individuals, to go out on this basis. Once in the land they would labor industriously for their living and concurrently give all possible time and effort to the various forms of Missionary work and Christian service.

The work in Liberia was greatly extended and enlarged. The foundations of the present Angola work were firmly laid, and there was a staff of 19 on the field in 1896. (At present there are 9 missionaries on the field in Angola and 6 on furlough, 15 missionary members of the Mission in all in 1943.)

About 1890 Bishop Taylor took on E. H. Richards on the other side of the continent. He had been a member of the Congregational party that had begun mission work at Inhambane and refused to abandon the people there when the American Board transferred their workers elsewhere.

William Taylor was not the sort of man to remain on the periphery of a task. When landing at Loanda in 1885 with his pioneer band of 45 men, women and children, his objective was a district a thousand miles inland. At that latitude they would have been exactly in the middle of the Continent. Dr. Chas. R. Summers, M.D. was appointed to press on into the interior about that distance in 1885. Two years later, worn down by heavy medical work to Belgians and to Natives, he was buried near the present Luluaburg, 500 miles north by west of where we are gathered and 125 miles from the nearest Methodist occupied territory.

This consecration of the field, by a Methodist missionary's grave, occupied two or three years later by the American Presbyterian Congo Mission, intensifies the keen interest we have in the work of that preeminently fruitful Mission.

Another by-product, so to speak, of Bishop Taylor's self-supporting Missions resulted in the salvation of tens of thousands of Natives, and laid the foundations for one of the notable missions of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

A convert named Harris on one of the Bishop Taylor stations on the

eastern border of Liberia under a powerful urge of the Spirit, crossed over the Cavalla River into what is known as the French Ivory Coast. Proceeding alone and with no backing, he evangelized for a few years the villages of a large district. Within that short time about one hundred thousand villagers definitely mended their ways, abandoned their drinking, fighting, immorality and all evil so far as they knew, burned their fetishes, built chapels—each with a cross—and gathered on the Sabbaths to worship God. After the enforced departure of their spiritual father they continued thus for ten years with no outside spiritual help.

The Methodists (British) working in the adjoining Gold Coast, heard of these believers and sent a missionary to reconnoitre, and then took over the field. Over forty thousand of these converts of Prophet Harris, as he came to be known, were found to be stable in the faith and worthy of early baptism.

During his twelve years as Bishop, William Taylor put Africa heavily on many Methodist hearts and placed this needy continent definitely on the Methodist map. He left a bold challenge, "A chain of Mission Stations right across Africa," and the links at both ends of the chain were already formed.

Bishop Joseph C. Hartzell was certainly the providential man to take up the task in Africa in 1896. Having given almost thirty years as superintendent of districts, as Editor of the "Advocate" for the Negro membership, and as Secretary of the Society especially caring for the education of the freedmen and their children, he brought to this task an intimacy of knowledge of the problems and a breadth of view, and a daring which showed him to be a great Christian statesman.

Besides those known, there certainly were many other results beneficial to various colonies and countries, notably to Liberia, arising from his visits and representations to the rulers and chancellaries of Europe, and to the local administrations.

The Church was now ready to appropriate funds for the work of Bishop Taylor and to back partially the aggressive, expanding programme instituted by Bishop Hartzell. However, there was a margin, rather a large one, not provided for by the appropriations. But the extensive circle of friends that he had gained in his Church-wide activities as Secretary, enabled Bishop Hartzell to secure for the work in Africa half a million dollars during his term of office. This was needed for the outgoing of missionaries, often for their support, for residences, churches, strategic properties, schools, equipment, etc. This total of the funds he personally raised and invested in Kingdom enterprises in the twenty years of his administration was approximately equal to the total sums contributed by the Church through the regular channels in those two decades.

Two new missions in the interior of Central Africa were founded in those twenty years. These may be considered as links in that chain of stations reaching across the continent as envisaged by his

predecessor. One was the Rhodesia Mission established by Bishop Hartzell in 1897. The other is now known as the Southern Congo Mission, established in 1910, which Bishop Hartzell encouraged and assisted. Roots and impulses toward the beginning of this Mission are traceable back to Bishop Taylor who organized the first Congo Mission Conference, and to his work on the Lower Congo, as well as to that in Angola. This work in the Southern Congo constituted a district of the Conference in Angola for five years, under the superintendency of the writer.

Bishop Hartzell also established Methodist work in Madeira, in Algeria and in Tunisia. In all of these places he found independent workers who gladly joined a large and more stable Mission and merged their resources in a programme of extension of the work in those various lands. Because of the close political, economic and cultural relations of these three countries with Europe, they were, on the retirement of Bishop Hartzell, attached to conferences and areas in Europe.

On his election in 1916 Bishop Eben S. Johnson found the geographical lines for Methodist occupation in Africa amply extended. Development was now the need and watchword. Again Providential leadings in the selection of the man are evident. Bishop Johnson's talents lay distinctly in the fields of pastoral activities and Conference administration. The twenty years of his incumbency witnessed a steady growth of the work in each of the Conferences, advance in standard of schools, large increases in every item of the statistics and the steadily advancing maturity of the African members of Conference.

Another notable contribution of Methodism to Africa was through Bishop Walter R. Lambuth. Born in China of missionary parents, he served as a missionary in that country and did service in Korea. With his father he was co-founder of the mission of his Church in Japan. For a time he was missionary secretary. Later as Bishop he was in charge of all foreign missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

On his birthday, November 10, 1911, at Leopoldville he wrote in his diary, "I thank God for the privilege of being in Africa. When a mere lad I read the life of Robert Moffat and the explorations of David Livingstone and desired to be a missionary in Africa. Upon returning to the United States from Japan in 1891 I offered the Board to come and open a Mission on or near the Upper Congo. The Board was not ready. In an interview with Henry M. Stanley I was confirmed in my views and strengthened in my purpose. He urged me and my Church to come. Said the field was open and ripe and that what was to be done should be done quickly."

It was thus in realization of an interest long cherished that he gladly accepted a commission of the Board of Missions to make this journey of exploration. He was accompanied by Dr. John W. Gilbert of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, a professor at Paine College. They selected the Atetela as the Divinely indicated field.

Two years later Bishop Lambuth returned with the pioneer party of missionaries and on February 12 1914, on the site of the present Central station at Wembo Nyama he led in the official opening of what is today known as the Central Congo Mission.

Bishop James Cannon, Jr., made two or three visits to the Central Congo Mission and gave much stimulus to the work through his forceful personality. Bishop Cannon used the airplane for some of his travels in Africa, as did his contemporary, Bishop Johnson. One can but speculate as to how soon it will be when the Bishop of this Area will have and use a plane in much of his itinerating.

Bishop Arthur J. Moore had for years the episcopal supervision of the numerous foreign missions of his Church. Besides this he was called upon for many extra services in America. He made two visits to the Central Congo Mission. The latter occasion was in 1939 and coincided with the Silver Jubilee of the Mission. Most appropriately he has been made President of the Board of Missions and Church Extension and his aggressive evangelistic spirit is giving stimulating leadership to the Church.

The Central Conference.

The Church is indebted to India for this particular type of conference. Its place is between the Annual Conference, styled "the basic body in the Church," and the General Conference. To it has been transferred some of the functions of each of these others. When first proposed, discerning minds characterized it as "a General Conference in embryo."

Dr. Harry Wescott Worley of China has given a masterly presentation of "THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE of the Methodist Episcopal Church, A study in Ecclesiastical Adaption, or A Contribution of the Mission Field to the Development of Church Organization," (1938). This volume is the source of much of the following information.

By the third decade of the Methodist Mission in India the missionaries had become keenly aware that "there are common interests and wants of our Church in India relating to its charities, education, publishing interests and other matters peculiar to the Church in India, demanding joint action in the entire Church, in order to secure consolidation and prevent irregularities, growing out of our widely separated fields of operation." That was the statement of the "Delegated Conference" constituted by the two Annual Conferences in India in 1880. Recognition by the General Conference was desired that year but it was not accorded until 1884, when it was given the status of and recognized as a Central Conference. From 1880 to 1900 the sessions were held biennially.

The General Conference of 1928 was faced with a number of acute problems relating to the work and administration in the mission fields. A special commission brought in a number of recommendations, many of them radical and wide sweeping in nature. Among these was the

delegating of the power under specific enabling acts of the General Conference, for the various Central Conferences to elect bishops. This involved a constitutional amendment and needed the approval of the Annual Conference, which was given almost unanimously by midyear 1929. This brought the Central Conference to relative maturity.

This authority was exercised in China in the election in 1930, on the seventh ballot of a missionary, and on the fourteenth of a national as bishops. This was done in a session in which the preponderance of delegates were Chinese. Subsequently the China Central Conference has elected as bishops two other missionaries and two Chinese.

The first Central Conference bishop in India was elected in 1931, a national; and in 1936, on the first and only ballot, a missionary was elected bishop. In 1940 one national and one missionary were elected bishops. In this session the proportion of nationals to missionaries was five to one.

For more than fifty years the problem of providing for the mission fields satisfactory, continuous episcopal supervision had perplexed session after session of the General Conference. In 1884 a solution was found by that body electing a missionary bishop, and others were elected in subsequent sessions. This proved satisfactory for the time for some fields, particularly Africa and India, but was not at all acceptable to others. In 1920 this form of episcopacy was discontinued, the three missionary Bishops of that day all being made General Superintendents. But it was invoked again in 1928 for one of the younger and as yet immature fields, Malaysia-Philippines, and again in 1936 for Africa. It bids fair to make provision for some fields for some time to come. But as the various Provisional Central Conferences come to maturity, to them certainly will be delegated the responsibility of electing their own bishops.

The Central Conference and Nationalism.

In several countries proposals of and movements toward inclusive national Protestant churches have been made. Without doubt, the fact of being a divided Church is a valid reproach upon the Christians of the World. Equally without doubt that fact is often exaggerated and perverted and made capital of beyond warrant, by interested parties. Could a perfectly uniform and harmonious and inclusive body of Christians be realized, are we sure that it would be a permanent, a practical and a satisfactory condition and procedure?

Would there not still operate the same factors and reasons that have resulted in the present division of the Christian body? There are the divers societies or parties in the Roman Church, the several sections of the Greek Orthodox Church, the multiplied Protestant Churches and groups.

Superficial or captious thinking often results in a demand for uniformity in the Church that is not expected in any other realm. What does God teach us in the physical realm? While there are close re-

semblances, rarely if ever, are two faces exactly alike; no two leaves on a tree are identical. Differences in kind, variety in species, adaptations to conditions, are seen on every hand throughout the whole creation. Undoubtedly, no inconsiderable values have emerged out of the protestations of minorities which developed into independent churches, for a time at least, as of the Methodist Protestants on the issue of lay participation in the counsels and control of the church, etc., and there has often resulted distinct enrichment of the Christian heritage.

The real reproach upon professing Christians is in being unChrist-like in spirit or in action. Where the beauty of Jesus is seen in a real unity in Him and in working together in harmony at the common task we need be but little, if at all, concerned over criticisms, but should regard them as our inescapable lot. Ascertaining as best we can the Will of God for each day, let us give ourselves as Jesus did to doing the Father's Will.

Notable among the movements toward national churches are those in India and in China. That the Methodists in both countries after urgent and long continued invitations to join those national churches and after extended and sympathetic consideration have not responded is not of itself any criticism or condemnation of those who have so joined. The way remains open, and is actually being travelled by the Methodists in both countries, to continue with these "National" Churches, and with other groups, in union and federated movements.

In connection with a consideration of the functioning of the Central Conference, and of its value to a country awakening to a lively national consciousness, it is well worth while to bring out extracts from Dr. Worley's chapter on "Results of the Central Conference in China":—

"We have now come to the place where we must pause long enough to ask how the Central Conference, during its forty years of history in China, has affected the Methodist Church in that land. It is not our place to judge whether the results have been good or otherwise. Doubtless there are some who, from the standpoint of their conviction that the establishment of a national church in every land is a primary objective of mission work, will feel that the results have been very unfortunate. With equal certainty we may expect others, because of their interest in world Christianity, to hail with delight a concrete example of the way an international church can and does work...

Dr. Frank T. Cartwright, missionary in China from 1917 to 1929, and from 1929 to the present time Associate Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions with special responsibility for Eastern and South-eastern Asia, writes:—

"My personal conviction is that the Central Conference of Eastern Asia and the increasing autonomy granted to it by successive General Conferences have been very largely, if not over-

whelmingly responsible for the fact that the Methodist Annual Conferences (predominantly Chinese in membership) have so far considered unfavorably the matter of going into the Church of Christ in China.

"I shall never forget in my attendance upon the National Christian Conference in 1922 listening to Dr. T. T. Liu. In that address, you recall, he pled for certain advance positions for the Chinese Church. As he came toward the conclusion of his address, after having listed those things which he wanted the Boards in America to grant to the Chinese Church, the Rev. Hu Caik Ciu, who was sitting just behind me, turned to another Foochow delegate and asked, "What is this man talking about? Everything he wants we Methodists already have."

"In other words, the Chinese leaders in the Methodist Episcopal Church have passed through a period of growing national consciousness, and have emerged as a part not of a distinctly Chinese church but of an organization which encircles the globe. Through the Central Conference it has been possible for them not only to realize national aspirations but also to find that wider fellowship which comes from stepping over the boundaries and limits of nations to join the world federation about which Bishop Bashford so often preached, an international and inter-racial church."

Dr. Worley sums up his conclusions as follows:—

"Since it has not yet been conclusively proved that to organize all the followers of Jesus into national churches is the best way of bringing in the Kingdom, other possible avenues of approach ought to be scrutinized. This year has seen glaring examples of national churches prostituted for the advance of unjustifiable nationalism. This study has shown that the Central Conference provides an opportunity for the expression of a worthy sense of national unity and the adoption of nation-wide programs of evangelism and religious education. That these desirable results may be secured within an organic world-church, and provide an experiment in another approach to Kingdom-building, is a fact which should be given the most careful examination."

The Central Conference and Unification.

The reflex influence of Christian missions on sending churches is proverbial to the informed. One outstanding benefit to our own Methodist Church is the Central Conference. It can be stated categorically that without this device Unification quite certainly would not have come when it did.

Separation in 1844 was no sooner a fact than individuals and groups in both bodies began to pray and work for re-union. From the late sixties the issue was agitated more or less continually in both Churches. One joint commission after another met and explored every pos-

sibility. A few propositions were agreed on and reported to the respective General Conferences.

One such plan was given the necessary vote by the General Conference and the Annual Conferences of the Church, South, but the Northern Church did not agree. Some years later another plan was submitted and the Northern Church passed it by a large majority, but the Church South failed to give it the passing vote. The Methodist Protestants were keenly interested in all these attempts, but took little active part in the negotiations.

During the quadrennium 1932-36 there was a Joint Commission on Unification representing the three Churches. This Commission met repeatedly in sessions that were "prayerful and fraternal; unmarred by such visitation and unhindered by such obstinacies as would be displeasing to the Great Head of the Church." They brought into review and under careful scrutiny every proposition and suggestion that had been made in the seventy years of search for a basis for Union. All to no avail.

Bishop Wm. F. McDowell was Chairman of this Commission. Twice, the latter time to me personally as I called upon him in his home in Washington, I heard him give a detailed account of the emergence of the Plan of Union, which won the unanimous support of the Commission, and which was eventually accepted by substantial margins above the required two thirds vote by each of the three Churches.

It was at a meeting toward the close of the quadrennium. Their labors seemed fruitless. As they adjourned one day it was with the expectation of having to record the next morning that no acceptable plan had been evolved; to adjourn and to report accordingly to their respective General Conferences.

For years the supreme passion of the life of Bishop McDowell, as of Bishops Hendrix, Ainsworth, John M. Moore, Cranston, Hughes, and Drs. Lewis and Straughn (afterward Bishop) and others, had been to see realized the Unification of these three closely akin Methodist Churches.

That night no sleep came to Bishop McDowell. His very soul was spread out before God in ardent prayer. Gradually lines of a Plan of Union, centering about the principle of the Central Conference, began to formulate in his mind. These he jotted down, and elaborated as needed. When presented to the Commission the following morning, this Plan gained immediate acceptance, was soon perfected and passed unanimously by the Commissioners. The rest is history.

The Central Conference and Africa.

The Discipline of the Methodist Church is a wonderful document. It gives guidance to the individual member in his service to Christ through the Church, and it outlines procedure for groups from the smallest unit in the local church up to the world-wide body. It is intended that it shall neither irk any devoted soul, nor that it should

result in wasted energy by overloading any group with unnecessary provisions or procedure. However, mistakes and misjudgements do occur. Saul's coat of armor may sometimes be handed out to the youthful David.

We are in the fourth year of our new Methodist Church. We are the inheritors of the traditions and the achievements of the three former Churches. We should not overlook the fact that there was a South Africa Central Conference authorized in 1920 and that three sessions of this Conference were held.

However necessary it is on any field that the first few sessions of a Central Conference be composed largely of missionary delegates as was the case in both India and China, it certainly is true that a Central Conference does not come into its proper stride and functioning until able Nationals constitute a goodly proportion, at least a half as a minimum, of the membership.

The General Conference of 1920 "gave the Central Conference such a multitude of new powers and responsibilities that it was a long time actually taking them over," even in the older fields of India and China, although those two Central Conferences were regarded as "in a real sense come of age."

Among the three new Central Conferences authorized was the South Africa Central Conference. This action was not taken in response to a petition from the field, for, so far as known to the writer, who was in attendance on that session of the General Conference, there was no such request from the field. But the Central Conference had so thoroughly proved and commended itself that the General Conference judged that it was needed in every major mission field and generously acted accordingly.

Probably there is no one who would maintain that in 1920 Central Africa was really ready for the Central Conference. Bishop Johnson reported in 1936 that when he came to this Area twenty years before there was no African member of any Annual Conference. That year there were 58. In 1921 the writer was present and assisted in the ordination, at Old Umtali, of the first African to be received into full membership in the Rhodesia Conference. I was a delegate from the Congo to the organizing session of the Central Conference, which immediately followed. Material for African ministerial delegates from the several conferences simply was not as yet available. As for African lay delegates, they have been much slower in emerging and developing than have ministerial members. Travel between the several conferences was much slower, more difficult and expensive than today.

The more than two decades that have elapsed have witnessed gratifying progress in the development of our African membership, both ministerial and lay. Immediately on their being received into membership into the various Conferences, the Africans have been placed on the committees and have contributed much in every way. Many of them have come to relative maturity in their grasp of

problem, and situations. The Africans today constitute a majority in each of the Annual Conferences and they are well forward in bearing a due share in the labors and responsibilities of Conference work.

Of the 120 full members of the five conferences across Central Africa, 82 are Africans, 37 are Europeans and one an Indian. Of the ministerial delegates, in three of the conferences an equal number of Africans and of missionaries were elected. The same proportion was desired by the missionaries in the other conferences, but in those conferences there were so few Africans who could speak English and the African voters themselves determined the results.

These 82 ordained ministers represent but a part of the product of our schools. Associated with them intimately in the work of the conferences and of the local churches are many of their former school mates, totalling an even larger number. These serve as full time local preachers, customarily listed in the appointments as "accepted supply pastors." Others are hospital orderlies, teachers in the various schools and helpers of various kinds. It is from these groups, mostly in the employ of the Mission or of the Church in some capacity, that the lay delegates to Annual Conferences are too commonly selected.

We are glad to record, however, that in each of the conferences there is the emergence of real laymen. Some have businesses of their own, some are in the employ of companies or of governments. And they with their fellow Africans in the ministry are deeply devoted to their Lord and, in the way of such laymen everywhere, are desirous to serve in every possible way. We rejoice to number some such among the delegates to this Conference. The expenses in coming to this Conference will be lighter than they would have been earlier. Costs always will be no inconsiderable factor and concern. But faced frankly and put into the more efficient financial programs that need to characterize the future, they can be provided. It is to be hoped that provision can be made from some source for the expenses of the missionary delegates. The African Church members of the various conferences have been challenged to meet the expenses of their elected delegates. But no one felt that, at this time anyway, they should be asked to contribute toward the expenses of Europeans. An African in the Rhodesia Conference voiced the opinion that any surplus should apply on expenses of the missionary delegates. Certainly these latter should not be expected, session after session, to pay their own expenses.

Liberia.

Liberia, our oldest mission field, rightly belongs in a unique way to the entire Church. That work was established just as the earlier separation occurred. Geographically it is decidedly isolated. A not unnatural result has been that this Mission has not had the attention that it needed and merited. Consequently Liberia has had sound reasons to feel at times that she has been a neglected, an all but abandoned child.

So far as inherent affiliations are concerned, as to inclusion in a Central or Jurisdictional Conference, there are distinct pulls in two directions. The Liberian members would quite certainly find a close affinity with the Negro conferences in America: the Native members would probably be equally at home with the membership in the Africa Central Conference. At the same time there are many dissimilarities between the general conditions in Liberia and the conditions in the five countries concerned in Central Africa.

Since Unification, a factor somewhat new has entered into the situation. The membership of the Central Jurisdiction has ever had a keen interest in Africa, and particularly in Liberia. Now that the way is open for a particular interest like this to manifest itself, there have been numerous expressions of a desire to make Liberia a special project of that Jurisdiction. On the part of the Liberia Conference, while there is not as yet any record of an action asking for affiliation with the Central Jurisdiction, there have been numerous expressions of desire for such relationship.

For several decades the Liberia Annual Conference has been represented in the General Conference. The travel expenses of such delegates are provided for. There would be but little extra expense for those delegates to attend the sessions of the Jurisdictional Conference as its session is held soon after the former.

In peace time steamer passage from America to Liberia is direct, more regular and cheaper than from Central Africa. After the war, service by plane will be frequent and fairly direct. Some Central Conferences have the proviso that the payment on travel and other expenses for the delegates of any Annual Conference shall be in proportion to the payment of the Conference on its apportioned share in the total cost of the Conference.

In 1940 Liberia elected its full quota of eight ministerial and eight lay delegates to this Conference, on a previous ration of one to six members of conference. In 1943 vacancies in the lists were filled. But as there is not provision in hand for expenses, and owing to the extreme difficulty of getting passage in these days, no ministerial delegate is expected to be present, and if one or two of the lay delegates do come, it will be entirely at their own personal expense.

To have Liberia, distant as it is and with its clamant need for extensive supervision, included in this Area, loads the one Bishop with more than he can adequately care for. Liberia sorely needs the full time of a resident Bishop. In several quarters this is recognized and the suggestion has been made that a Missionary Bishop be elected for that field, probably by the Central Jurisdiction, and borrowing a suggestion from the action of several Central Conferences, that it be for a limited period, say four years, with the possibility of reelection.

The Commission on Central Conferences, headed by Dr. L. O. Hartman—probably the greatest authority on Central Conference matters—has passed a recommendation to present to the General Confer-

ence in 1944 that, for Episcopal supervision, Liberia be related to the Central Jurisdiction. So, unless there be a reversal of opinion in these several quarters, the probability is that Liberia will be related to that Jurisdiction.

The events of the past year have linked Liberia much more closely than formerly with the United States politically and commercially. The world knows of the landing fields recently made there.

The Peoples of this Area.

With the exception of Liberia, the peoples among whom we labor are of the Bantu section of the Negro race. This is one important element of unity in the area of this Central Conference.

They are generally of virile stock and, in their response and reaction to the challenge and impact of these recent decades, show that they are just average human stuff. Their primitive life and culture up to around sixty years ago had continued in comparative isolation, untouched by notable stimulus from outside.

For the European peoples and tribes emerging centuries ago from their backwardness the tempo of the changes was set by the slow world progress of that day. They had a relatively advanced preparation for the industrial and mechanical revolution and progress that set in around a century ago.

Few other peoples have had the experiences that have come to the tribes of Africa of having beat upon and against them in their simple, self-sufficient village life in the forests and on the plains, of a so greatly advanced, highly organized, swiftly moving industrial civilization, as has been hurled into all parts of Africa. The response of the backward African to this abrupt invasion and his adjustment of himself to the revolutionizing impact of the new order, has been the marvel of thoughtful observers.

Perhaps there was a better foundation laid for the rapid advance of the Africans in all phases of his life of the new day than was realized by any except those who had come into a definite knowledge of the peoples and of their culture. To say that the Africans are average human stuff is to bespeak innate and diversified abilities and talents in all departments of life, industrial, commercial, political, social, mental, artistic and religious. Volumes have been written and many more will be written in exposition of this thesis.

Today in every avenue of activity in Africa, Natives constitute the majority of the staff in industrial, commercial and political activities, the higher and more responsible posts being occupied, as would be expected, by foreigners. But every day sees more of these foreigners being displaced and Africans being stepped up into positions of heavier responsibilities and which demand higher training and skill. Necessities of budgets and of meeting competition forces all the secular agencies to make all their farms, shops, offices, and other establishments to be schools for the training of an indigenous staff. And the African has demonstrated that he has the stuff and charac-

ter to make good. The innate worth and capacity of the African has been abundantly established.

The Things of the Spirit.

In the social, the moral, and the religious spheres of life the effects and the influences of the disturbance and the overthrow of the past and the re-directing of the new life of the tribes of Africa, are more elusive of exact or even approximate appraisal or statement.

Every kind and class of men from nearly every country under heaven have pressed into Africa with all sorts of motives and reasons for coming. The most general motive has been gain. Means and methods of making money have seldom been nicely weighed. Happily there has been the vigilant and protective presence of Colonial Governments, most of which are definitely concerned about the protection of the Native people. At the main centers of industrial activity the Native employees today are well fed, housed and cared for. The exceptions that do exist are not unlike instances in most countries of the world and need the increasingly vigilant attention of the governments, spurred on by international associations and leagues.

A predominant characteristic of these foreigners is materialism. The primitive African was ever strongly impregnated with that same spirit and the result of the industrial penetration of Africa has been to deepen the influence of materialism upon the Native peoples.

The low morals of the African Natives constituted a large part of the necessity for Christian evangelization. It is regrettable to need to record that the net influence of the coming of many of the foreigners to Africa has been not the raising of the morals of the Natives, but an impediment to their betterment.

In all our Mission territories we have had to do in the beginning mainly with animistic heathen. In practically all of these territories there have come within recent years traders of the Mohammedan faith. The strongholds of that religion to the North, East and South, are receiving but slight attention from the Christian forces. Only in Liberia and Portuguese East Africa of our Conference Areas does Islam seem to have obtained a firm hold. But the menace of that faith is everywhere before us and this should constitute a spur to us early to occupy fully our allotted fields with adequate forces and thoroughly to evangelize the people.

Empowerment and Commissioning.

Paragraph 1612 of the 1940 Discipline reads, "The Africa Provisional Central Conference shall have the powers of a Central Conference... except the power to elect Bishops."

And paragraph 399, reads, "To a Central Conference shall be committed for supervision and promotion, in harmony with the Discipline and interdenominational contractual agreements, the missionary, edu-

cational, evangelistic, industrial, publishing, medical, and other con-
 nectional interests of the Annual Conferences, Provisional Annual Con-
 ferences, and Missions within its territory and such other matters as
 may be referred to it by said bodies, or by order of the General
 Conference; and it shall provide suitable organizations for such work
 and elect the necessary officers for the same."

The several interests, or forms of service, given in this paragraph
 have engaged the thought of our missionaries more or less from the
 time of the call of each to Kingdom service. Since arriving on the
 field each of you present has been related to one or to several of
 these various lines of work. Our African brethren have come up
 through the schools available, all along the way serving in the work
 at hand in one capacity or another.

Each and all of you have been in meetings or conferences in-
 numerable, staff meetings on stations, circuit and district conferences,
 Annual Conferences, committees charged to find the solution to all
 sorts of problems. You have been parties to, or observers of pro-
 grams in which the trial and error method has actually obtained.
 Most of you have visited the stations of other missions. Certainly all
 of you have discussed mission and Church work and methods with
 Africans and missionaries of other churches and societies.

The majority of you, some repeatedly, have met in the General
 Missionary Conferences of your respective colonies or countries and
 have joined in the recurring discussions of these very same "interests"
 and subjects. Several of you have been delegates to sessions of the
 General Conference, others of you have been privileged to attend such
 sessions. You are therefore reasonably, although variously, prepared,
 so far as such opportunities and participations are concerned, for
 this first session of the Africa Provisional Central Conference.

I said earlier that the year 1916 found the geographical lines for
 Methodist occupation amply extended. I do not know of any extension
 of these lines since. I do know of cheerful releasing of several areas
 to other societies that were able to occupy at once or more strongly.

I mentioned a few of the explorers and pioneers. A goodly num-
 ber of names might be added. Approximately 500 Methodist mis-
 sionaries have landed in Africa in the 110 years since Melville B.
 Cox. The bodies of fully one hundred of these have been laid away
 in African soil, more than half of them in Liberia in the early days.
 At least one hundred other Europeans have labored for longer or
 shorter periods in the various missions. An unlisted number of Afri-
 can men and women have heard the call of their Lord to full time
 service and have gladly responded. Most of these continue to this
 day, but some have gone on.

The missionaries of the Methodist Church for this Area number 151.
 From the Central Africa Conferences 55 are on furlough or are de-
 tained in America by war conditions. This leaves 80 on the field for
 21 stations, a thin, and, in places, a broken line. Of full time African
 workers of all kinds, ministerial, educational, medical, etc., there are

between 400 and 500. Part time African workers, mostly in charge of village chapels and schools, many—who because of ridiculously small “pay”, depend largely on their gardens—number fully another 500, probably many more.

The Church members of the Area approximate 50,000 with another 50,000 as preparatory members; another hundred thousand are in the way of becoming believers and Methodists.

Out of this goodly company of several hundred full and part time Christian workers, and the tens of thousands of Church members, you have been delegated to face for Methodism in Central Africa the situation and the needs of this hour.

Exploring and Pioneering still needed.

We are met in a part of Africa that is particularly overshadowed to this day by Livingstone. On his map of 1854 he located these copper mines and in his book he gave information that guided the prospectors in their search. The playmate of his children in Scotland, Frederick Stanley Arnot, received his call to missionary work through hearing his letters read. Particularly did young Arnot feel an urge to come into the very country that Livingstone was headed for when he died. He left England in 1881 and, continually working toward that purpose, he opened the path into this country and arrived at Bunkeya in 1886. Mission work has continued there ever since. Right near are the salt springs that Livingstone had heard of from afar and which he had on his list of objectives. Mr. Arnot founded the Garanganze Mission of the Plymouth Brethren, today one of the largest and most fruitful of Central Africa.

Another objective of Livingstone's on that last journey was the Copper hills at Kambove, 60 miles southwest of Bunkeya, and 110 miles northwest of Elisabethville. At Kambove, on a hill near to those two hills of copper ore we built a mission station in 1913.

Contrast the situation today as concerns the Kingdom with what it was three score and ten years ago when Livingstone finished his long weary trek, 200 miles east and a bit south of here. New recruits, on hearing of the experiences of the explorers and pioneers, are tempted at times to feel that they have fallen on dull days. Let us heed and ponder well the words of Livingstone, “The end of the geographical feat is the beginning of the enterprise!”

Many studies of the animistic religion of the Bantu have revealed how inclusively it dominated every phase of life. No less extensively should, and rightly does, the life hid with Christ in God command the every thought and activity and relation of the Christian. Explorations are yet needed to make this a reality generally experienced. In the enterprise of discovering the very best ways of making this transition and realizing this achievement in the lives of our members, we look with intense anticipation also to our African brothers and sisters.

Missionary.

Several "interests" or lines of activity are particularly mentioned for our consideration. The first of these is "missionary", the activities of one sent. That is general and inclusive. We will take our clue from Jesus Himself, "As the Father hath sent me...", "I came to minister," "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth," "For I am come down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent me." And on that Easter eventide Jesus, holding out His nail torn hands, finished by saying, "Even so send I you."

Who are those who are to do "missionary" work? Why, all to whom comes the "peace" He bespoke and bequeathed. We fail to the extent that we do not lead each believer to a realization of this high commissioning by our Lord. And in the technique of discovering that Will of the Father, all that we have learned ourselves, and know that others have learned and proved, must be made available for all.

Education.

Educational interests are the next listed. Some might contend that evangelism should have this place. Were the two mutually exclusive it might be so. But they are not. It has been said that a missionary from any of certain countries and groups "cannot be landed anywhere but he will have a school going before breakfast next morning." It should be so. Quite probably that newly arrived missionary had a service with the chief and the curious group that gathered soon after his arrival and evening worship at his camp. And the books he and his native helpers held in their hands bespoke the school. These two activities are closely interwoven and must, with other lines of work, ever be as the several threads woven into the one fabric. Experience has abundantly proved that the opportunity second to none for evangelism is in the school room.

The home is the primary school. A main and constant endeavor is that here each young pupil shall be led into a definite acquaintance with Jesus. And then in all of its varied ministry of teaching and guiding the individual and moulding the community, the Church must be ever on the alert that each life shall be led to that basal experience of being born again and to that supreme decision to make Jesus Lord indeed.

Evangelism.

And just what is evangelism? What is its scope and its distinctive aim? In 1938 Dr. Mott led in a world wide study of "Evangelism for the World Today." In a 300 page volume extracts from the contributions of 125 persons are given. Evidently, an exhaustive statement is impossible here. Suffice it for this occasion to present a statement contributed by the writer to that study:

"Evangelism is making known to men—sinful, lost, perishing, hopeless and helpless as they are—the message of salvation by God .

through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Evangelism declares that this salvation and the way back to God has been wrought out and made available to all men because God is Love. Inevitably moved by the urge of this love, God in the fullness of time, in and through Jesus Christ, came physically among men and shared their life, thus convincingly manifesting His very nature and character, and effecting man's redemption on the Cross. Of utmost importance, though often neglected or confused in the presentation of the Evangel, is the truth clearly made known by the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and His life among men, that God is not remote from man's present, every-day life, but that through the person of the Holy Spirit, He is ever present with men and available for their regeneration, help, cleansing, guidance, and empowering; and that God's desired dwelling place is in each and every human heart just as soon and as long as that heart is ready and desirous that God should dwell in, possess, and have the fellowship and service of the entire life of that man.

"Of ways and means of making the Evangel known, the following have ever been used and owned of God in Africa, as well as elsewhere, when employed sincerely and humbly in His name:

"(1) Family worship and instruction in the home, both by example and by precept to the children and others, collectively and individually.

"(2) The regular proclamation of the Christian message in stated meetings, and in Churches on the Sabbath, in class meetings, and prayer meetings, in classes for the preparation of candidates for Church membership, in chapel exercises and devotional periods in all classes of schools, in camp meetings, and in district and other conferences.

"(3) Service rendered to others, singly and in groups, by Christians individually and by the Church of Christ through organized institutions, hospitals, homes, schools, and in and through various other organizations that meet the needs of men and that provide for the realization and development of the manifold possibilities of man's nature."

It is recorded of St. Francis of Assisi that one day he said to a novitiate that they would go down into the city and preach. They set out and together walked about the town, through the busy market place and industrial parts, street after street, and as they neared the monastery on their return the novitiate asked his senior, "When are we going to begin to preach?" to which St. Francis replied, "My son, we have been preaching ever since we set out. Our every look and action has been manifesting forth the Gospel Message."

Ours is the privilege and task to lead our people to enter upon that life hid in Christ and Christ dwelling in each of them through the Holy Spirit, that their every activity in home, field, travel, commerce, shall manifest and proclaim the Christ.

Industrial.

When we speak of the industrial do we take a drop down into a realm to be called the "secular" as opposed to the "spiritual"? A Methodist minister of South Africa said to me some years ago that it was the experience in that Conference, of which he was at the time the President, that most of their successful ministers and pastors had taken extended courses in shops. Attention to blue prints, exactness of workmanship, carrying out to completeness, all contributed to the making of an effective workman of the Kingdom.

Here particularly is where we lead our people to an obedience to the latter section of God's first command to man, to "subdue the earth, and have dominion..." A wider range of crops to supply a sufficient and varied diet, improvement and upkeep of the soil, successful raising and bettering of stock of all kinds for food and for income, utilizing soils for permanent buildings and woods for furniture and all other kindred lines, has been, and ever more efficiently should be, part and parcel of our program, particularly on the main stations. What contributions of experience and suggestions for the future are you prepared to make?

Publishing.

John Wesley gave a good example and Methodists ever since have strongly believed in the printed page. Why should not all men be heirs of the best thought of all the ages? As at the beginning there was no literature available in these African tongues, books needed to be produced. It is through the medium of one's mother tongue that the heart is best reached.

Necessity led to the establishing of a press in each of our six Conferences. Liberia's was sold during one of the slumps in the work there. Angola's unused for a time, has been dusted off and is producing moderately. Southern Congo's was a very small affair and wisely was sold, but may have a successor ere long. Central Congo, Rhodesia and S. E. Africa have lively and very useful presses. The last, located at Johannesburg, is the largest and most productive of all. You will doubtless be giving consideration as to how these various plants may be used more extensively.

The increasing availability of acceptable and needed manuscripts for translation, especially through the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, is a very great asset.

Our "South Africa Missionary Advocate" has been classed as one of the meatiest of journals. Its future will be a particular subject to settle.

Medical.

Medical interests, while listed last, have an early claim on the average missionary. The sick we have always with us. They are helpless and needy and on the arrival of any one likely to be able to

give any relief, they appear and make their appeals. To heal was one of the specific commands, as it was a large activity of our Lord. Each of five of our six Conferences has one doctor, and one has three, all happily now on the field. Some doctors are nearing retirement and the matter of replacements and of needed additional doctors is a serious one. We have nearly a score of nurses, but double that number are needed.

The crude buildings and equipment with which practically every doctor has carried on heroically in the early days have in some instances been superseded by better ones. Other improvements are under way in some cases. But no plant provided for as yet is adequate.

Our doctors and nurses conduct six leper camps and more could be opened were staffs available.

Practically every doctor and nurse upon arrival on the field began training assistants. The Africans are well suited to this work. The heavy routine of each hospital and dispensary is carried on efficiently by these locally trained helpers. Often for weeks, when necessary, the native staff will carry on alone, except for operations and complicated cases, and with success.

Preventative medicine is a major interest of all of the medical staffs. The main training centers are particularly in the plans of the Board in this regard.

Several of the governments have splendid and large programs for medical service to the Natives. In all cases they greatly appreciate the activities of the Missions in this service. Subsidies are given for medicines and for personnel. However extensive the medical program and provision by the government or other agencies, the Mission Hospital or Dispensary has a secure and distinctive place of its own. Of course it is seldom good policy that such service be established near the public institutions, which are usually near large centers. But it is a sad day for the people when a Mission institution is removed or cannot be built.

The Belgian Government has a most commendable system of schools for training native medical assistants. A higher school at Leopoldville qualifies candidates as near doctors, including minor surgery.

Most gratifying is the action in 1940-1941 of Universities in the Union of South Africa of admitting African students into the medical colleges, and further of giving bursaries, or scholarships to successful competing candidates.

Miscellaneous.

In each of the four countries across Central Africa in which we work there are general Missionary Conferences. In these our missionaries have actively participated from the first. In each of them there are proposals, for a consideration of a much closer union or a merger of the several missions. These suggestions have not arisen from the Africans; it is not a matter of nationalism. The rather is it

a question as to the best policy as mooted by one missionary and another, or by several. It might be wise to have a committee consider the subject, and for the Conference to become acquainted with the situations in the various countries.

What adaptations of the Discipline should be made for Africa? How can the excellent Financial Plan be made widely known throughout the membership and worked into the policy and actual operation of each local church?

Stewardship in its wide meaning, as also in its specific reference to income, with tithing as a correct basis, has been pretty faithfully inculcated everywhere by the missionaries, both by precept and by example. Local support has been preached from the beginning and expected in an increasing scale year by year. Each Conference has a certain number of churches that are entirely supported locally. But no one is at all satisfied with the results so far achieved.

The transition from mission support to local support is a difficult one. How to get the average member to look upon the Church as his, as a new tribe, as it were, a society in which he should feel a keen personal interest. How to eliminate and dispel his feeling that the service and benefits received from the Church are due to him and for a mere nominal contribution on his part; or none at all?

Is there a possibility of leading our African people on to such active participation in the work of the Church that they will not fall into the common pattern seen in America. From there we have this, "It is generally agreed among those who have made the most scientific analysis of different groups of our population, that five per cent of the people belong to groups properly recognized as leaders; perhaps thirty per cent are intelligent, discriminating followers; while approximately sixty-five per cent have a tendency to go with the tide as the tide may go at any particular time."

Our pastors quite generally feel that they are inadequately supported, and teachers and other mission employees that they are poorly paid. This is a recurring subject year after year. The majority of missionaries agree in general with the contention, and have sweat and labored through the years to improve matters.

There was general relief with the introduction in the new Church of the Field Committee. That is a distinct and vital step forward in the transition, from the period when the Mission was necessarily predominant to the acceptance by the indigenous Church of its proper responsibility for the support of its own ministry. It came at a most opportune moment in our various Conferences.

One notable effect of their participation in this Committee is that the African members have been surprised, at times amazed, at the problems of providing a sufficient income for the current budget. As they become a bit more seasoned in the work, it is to be hoped that they can and will give productive leads in bringing the interests of the Church and of the Kingdom home to the hearts of the mem-

bership of the Church so that they will respond in adequate service and support for them.

My observation is that considering a group of African young men from our schools, especially in the older Missions, half of them working as pastors and teachers, and the others in secular employ, those in the church and mission employ are fully as well dressed, have as varied and sufficient diet, have more saved up, have as many facilities such as books, bicycles, sewing machines, and have luxuries such as phonographs, house adornments, etc., as the average of their fellows in other employ, with here and there an exception. There are quite certainly more of the sons and daughters of ministers who are graduates of advanced courses than of any other equal number of men.

However, this does not go counter to the contention that the indigenous Church should more adequately support its ministry. But it is an exhortation to our brethren and their wives to appraise correctly the local situation and to count their mercies. I have many times said to individuals and to groups who were truly struggling along on admittedly low and inadequate incomes, "God certainly has ways of making it up to you men, and of actually providing from unexpected sources for your needs." And I have had hearty assent as a rule. God does not forget or neglect His own.

And I want to leave on definite record what I have said in all the conferences, "We never will have a love-filled, devoted, titling membership generally in the Church until we have that sort of a ministry and lay leadership."

And, my African brethren, what particular light or suggestion do you give as to how to awaken the ministry and the membership to the importance and the obligation and the sacredness of making due and sufficient provision for the superannuates? Some conferences, in just recognition of the worthy claims, not long hence to become rather numerous, of non-conference members, are making provision also for those now listed as accepted supply pastors, and other similarly worthy classes who are giving through many years devoted whole time service on very low incomes.

Lay Activities.

From the days of the Apostles men and women in the ordinary walks of life on their own initiative, motivated by the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them, have served needy people about them. The presence of deaconesses and of lay leaders in the Church is not a new or recent phenomenon. These people just go on in a matter-of-fact way, quietly and without any thought of title or recognition. And the vast body of that service in Jesus' name will never be known generally on earth, nor tabulated in the statistics of the Church Militant.

Nevertheless, the value of the abilities and the service of many

of these servants of the Lord can be enhanced and conserved and definitely built into the larger results when included in a well wrought out program of the Church. Moreover, many are personally unaware that they have gifts and abilities for particular lines of service and for leadership. Others are naturally modest and hesitant about seeming to take a lead in any activities, and so need to be brought forward and commissioned to take on definite responsibilities. The chapter on the Board of Lay Activities makes exhaustive provision for affording ample scope for all available lay ability, both for men and for women.

For the women there is in addition the distinctive field suggested and outlined in the Woman's Society for Christian Service, beginning in the local church and reaching on up to the wider fields. In some of the conferences the women have shown, not only a readiness for such group activity, but have actually proceeded to organize societies and to undertake work.

The fourteen suggested lines of activities for laymen as given in paragraph 1212 of the Discipline open out unlimited avenues for service, many of which would in many cases remain untouched unless definitely pointed out to the men and women in the local churches.

Most gratifying has been the out-cropping of the missionary spirit in several of the conferences. Angola has a considerable fund in hand for extension work and has a required incorporation about completed. South East Africa has been functioning in a Home Missionary Society for some years. Rhodesia began gathering a fund several years ago, and searching for a field, and this last year rejoiced in the appointment of a splendid young couple to real pioneering mission work in a neighboring tribe. It is notable that this interest has in several instances manifested itself just naturally in the third or fourth decade of the life of a Mission. We can soon expect similar action in the younger Missions.

In all cases our African members have wished this enterprise to be distinctly theirs, at the same time seeking advice and cooperation from the missionaries. Has the time arrived for setting up a Central Conference Missionary organization?

Planning for the future.

Quite commonly Africa is regarded as a unit in a list of mission fields. This is misleading. Africa is not a country, but a continent. In Africa there are at least a dozen different governmental languages, to say nothing of the 800 Native languages. Notwithstanding, there can be an effective grouping as has been actually suggested in America this past year, into three or four sectional conferences. Each of these would include several Christian Councils, or Colonial General Conferences of Missions.

The International Missionary Council has actually functioned in part as a unifying agency in Africa. But the awareness on the part of home secretaries and administrators as well as of representative mis-

sionaries on furlough from several parts of Africa, both in England and America, that the general problems in Africa should be tackled together, led to the holding of the Westerville Conference. This conference expressed gratification of the spiritual and other implications of "The Atlantic Charter and Africa from an American Standpoint", a Report prepared by the Committee on Africa, the War and Peace Aims, headed by Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes. Certainly Africa is receiving more definite and sympathetic attention than perhaps ever before.

Within our own church specific interest has this year been focused on Africa. The Board of Missions has a Joint Committee on Religious Education in Foreign Fields. They are taking up the various fields seriatim. The Congo was chosen for consideration in the January meeting, and copies of their recommendation have been sent, not only to missionaries in the two Congo Conferences, but also to several in the other conferences. It is the expressed hope and expectation from the Board that your consideration of these reports and suggested actions will elicit responses and produce recommendations and actions on your part.

In addition to the long list of excellent specific topics and recommendations emanating from these two conferences, you may well consider the topic of recreation and social amusements. The African is equally social in his nature and instincts with other peoples, if not more so. God has put the play instinct in man. It persists in the normal individual until late in life, though varying in manifestations through the years.

In African primitive life there were games, many of which may well be conserved. The great recreation was the dance. With rare exceptions the African Christians themselves disallow the dance, as well, of course, as the beer drinks. The Christian Church has a rich program of clean sports and activities to place before its members in games, contests, concerts, marches on holiday occasion in observance of national anniversaries, etc.

You may wish to make a statement for the Church at Home concerning the present occupation of the field and the magnitude of the task before us in the regions for which we are specifically and solely responsible. You know of the considerable areas in each conference territory which are practically unoccupied, and of those that are but slightly cared for as yet. You hear repeatedly, and should report the clamant cries for more teachers and for ever better trained teachers. The constant problems you face each year to find even tolerably trained workers, should be known in specific terms to the Church at home.

The inadequate staffs at our training centers and the too limited accommodations and provision for applying students should be made known anew, and for the Area, additional specialists in several lines, among them for recreational training, should be listed.

In the Constitution you will be considering for the Conference, you

will doubtless be determining whether it should provide for an Executive Committee or Board to act between sessions. Clarification of nomenclature would seem to claim particular attention. There are in the Area wide diversities of meaning to such terms as evangelist, local preacher, assistant or associate pastor, accepted supply pastor, etc.

As I pass my seventieth birthday this year, provision needs to be made in 1944 for Episcopal supervision of the Area for the quadrennium ahead.

By present requirements as to numbers of delegates you should qualify to have "Provisional" eliminated from the name of this Conference. But a specific action by the General Conference is necessary for that and in addition a further specific act of empowering would be necessary to enable you to elect your own Bishop. However, definite hints have come from America that the requirements in several particulars are quite certain to be raised.

In any case the General Conference will expect definite proposals and memorials to come from you as suggestions for their consideration and hints for their guidance.

A Personal Word.

I bespeak the privilege of a personal word in closing. I was the first missionary in Africa to be elected to this office. You have received me everywhere with utmost cordiality and there has been unfailing courtesy and cooperation throughout the years.

It has been a very great joy to Mrs. Springer as well as to myself to meet with you in the Annual Conferences for these past seven years, and to have rich fellowship with you there and in your always most hospitable homes. Mrs. Springer has sought to have whenever possible a seat that enabled her to look into the faces, especially of our beloved African brothers and sisters.

We had previous acquaintance with most of the personnel in all five conferences across Central Africa, and had had the treasured privilege of pioneering experience in two of the fields.

As for Liberia, I just missed being born there, my Father having offered for missionary service in Africa. Mrs. Springer's interest in foreign mission was awakened by that vigorous, devoted missionary among the Kru tribe of Liberia, Mary Sharp. Her first bit of missionary work was collecting materials to fill a barrel for Miss Sharp's work.

Thus very definitely in coming to this work we had the missionaries and the peoples of all the Conferences in our hearts. Depending on travel conditions, our departure for America will come about a year hence, possibly earlier, in February. We hope and expect to be able to continue in Kingdom work there for some considerable time. But though at a distance, you may be assured that we shall carry you one and all on our hearts in a never ending prayer for God's rich blessing through His empowering Presence to be ever with you.

"Looking unto Jesus."

We began with Christ who is from the beginning; as we close this address our eyes are still toward Him. He it is who is the World's only hope; He is the actuality of the great heart expectation of man. In Him was answered the question, "Why Man"?

The attributes of His personality awaken general approval and veneration in every land. To pay the price of partial realization in oneself of such a character, to say nothing of an approximation, such as seer. in Paul and in multitudes of others down through the centuries, is more than the average man seems willing or ready to pay.

Happily many a man and many a woman seeing God, particularly as revealed in Jesus, and realizing their own insufficiency in themselves, have yielded themselves unreservedly to God. This has given the Eternal a chance, conditioned always on their full and continuing cooperation, to build lives through whom He has been able to work mightily in carrying forward His purposes of love and of salvation.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the One who is bidding today, as indeed ever but now even more widely and more earnestly than ever before, if that were possible, for the hearts of men. And He is the One whom men supremely need. Many other names and hopes and recommended values have been presented to men and tried by them. these have not supplied men's vital need. There is wide acceptance of the statement and fact that, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." To exemplify that salvation, and to commend it to men, is our supreme task.

Cordially submitted,

JOHN M. SPRINGER.